

AMENDMENTS IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) In a single unit cellular telephone with internal processor and memory and built-in display device and keyboard, a method of tracking available service plan minutes for a user of the cellular phone, comprising:

providing a user-selectable option for tracking available usage time remaining within said service plan minutes, said user-selectable option being provided within a menu of available options provided by internalized applications of said cellular telephone;

prompting a user for user-input of options for tracking service plan information and displaying available minutes information on said built-in display device, wherein said displaying information is selected from among displaying actual available minutes and displaying a time tracking bar indicative of a percentage of available minutes remaining, wherein said prompting is initiated when the available usage time menu option is selected;

recording and storing service plan information in the memory of said cellular phone;

monitoring time usage for calls on said cellular phone via said internal processor and memory; and

displaying available time of said service plan on a the built-in display device of said cellular phone.

2-3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) The method of Claim [[3]] 1, wherein said service plan information includes a number of peak period minutes and off-peak period minutes and wherein:

said monitoring step further comprises separately monitoring said peak period minutes and said off-peak period minutes; and

said displaying step further comprises separately displaying a first available minutes output associated with said peak period minutes and a second available minutes output associated with said off-peak period minutes;

wherein said displaying displays said first and said second available minutes output as a numerical value when numerical display option is selected and said displaying displays the time tracking bar when time-bar display option is selected.

5. (original) The method of Claim 4, wherein said displaying step displays only said first available minutes output during a clock time associated with said peak period minutes and displays only said second available minutes output during a next clock time associated with said off-peak period minutes.

6. (previously presented) The method of Claim 4, further comprising:
pre-selecting a non-zero threshold number of minutes of time at which to alert a user that the available usage time within said service plan is approaching zero; and
outputting an alert signal when said available minutes reaches the pre-selected non-zero threshold, whereby said user is able to refrain from exceeding a total number of minutes within said service plan.

7. (previously presented) The method of Claim 6, wherein said displaying step includes providing said alert signal by flashing said display.

8. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein, when concurrent display is selected by a user, said displaying step concurrently displays both a numerical output and said graphical bar.

9. (currently amended) A cellular telephone comprising:
an internal processor and associated memory;
a built-in display device; and
program code executed by said internal processor for tracking available service plan minutes for a user of said cellular phone, comprising code for:

providing a user-selectable option for tracking available usage time remaining within said service plan minutes, said user-selectable option being provided within a menu of available options provided by internalized applications of said cellular telephone;

prompting a user for user-input of options for tracking service plan information and displaying available minutes information on said built-in display device, wherein said displaying information is selected from among displaying actual available minutes and

displaying a time tracking bar indicative of a percentage of available minutes remaining, wherein said prompting is initiated when the available usage time menu option is selected;

recording and storing service plan information in the memory of ~~en~~ said cellular phone;

monitoring time usage for calls on said cellular phone via said internal processor and memory; and

displaying available time of said service plan on the built-in display device of said cellular phone.

10-11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The cellular telephone of Claim [[10]] 9, wherein said service plan information includes a number of peak period minutes and off-peak period minutes and wherein:

said monitoring program code further comprises code for separately monitoring said peak period minutes and said off-peak period minutes; and

said displaying program code further comprises code for separately displaying a first available minutes output associated with said peak period minutes and a second available minutes output associated with said off-peak period minutes;

wherein said displaying program code displays only said first available minutes output during a clock time associated with said peak period minutes and displays only said second available minutes output during a next clock time associated with said off-peak period minutes;

wherein said displaying displays said first and said second available minutes output as a numerical value when numerical display option is selected and said displaying displays the time tracking bar when time-bar display option is selected.

13. (canceled)

14. (previously presented)The cellular telephone of Claim 12, further comprising:

program code for pre-selecting a non-zero threshold number of minutes of time at which to alert a user that the available usage time within said service plan is approaching zero; and

program code for outputting an alert signal when said available minutes reaches the pre-selected non-zero threshold, whereby said user is able to refrain from exceeding a total number of minutes within said service plan.

15. (previously presented)The cellular telephone of Claim 12, wherein said displaying program code includes code for flashing said display to provide said alert signal.

16. (previously presented)The cellular telephone of Claim 12, wherein:
said program code for prompting for user entry of display information includes code for enabling selection of concurrent display whereby said displaying program code concurrently displays both a numerical output and said graphical bar.

17. (previously presented)A cellular telephone system comprising:
a service provider;
at least one cellular telephone that is provided cellular service via said service provider;
means for tracking minute usage for calls on said cellular phone; and
means for providing a user of said cellular phone with a display of available minutes in a service plan associated with said cellular phone, wherein said available minutes are displayed as a graphical bar on a display device built into said cellular phone and said graphical bar is displayed at one or more of a number of programmed display periods including: at power on of said cellular telephone; at completion of each cellular call; at a user request for display of available minutes; and continuously while said display device is on.

18. (previously presented)The cellular telephone system of Claim 17, wherein:
said tracking means includes monitoring said minute usage at a database of said service provider of said service plan; and
said providing means includes transmitting an available minutes output to said cellular phone at a termination of each of said calls, wherein said display includes said transmitted available minutes output.

19. (previously presented) The cellular telephone system of Claim 17, wherein said service plan information includes a number of peak period minutes and off-peak period minutes and wherein said cellular telephone comprises:

a processor and associated memory;

a display device; and

program code executed by said processor for tracking available service plan minutes for a user of said cellular phone, comprising code for:

recording service plan information on said cellular phone;

monitoring minute usage for calls on said cellular phone, wherein said monitoring program code includes code for separately monitoring said peak period minutes and said off-peak period minutes; and

displaying available minutes of said service plan on said display device, wherein said displaying program code includes code for separately displaying a first available minutes output associated with said peak period minutes and a second available minutes output associated with said off-peak period minutes.

20. (canceled)

21. (original) The cellular telephone of Claim 9, wherein said program code for implementing said displaying step includes code for displaying said available minutes at one or more of a number of programmed display periods including: at power on of said cellular telephone; at completion of each cellular call; at a user request for display of available minutes; and continuously while said display device is on.

22. (original) The cellular telephone of Claim 9, further comprising:

program code for automatically downloading service plan information from a service provider during power up of said cellular telephone; and

program code for receiving periodic updates of said available time from said service provider.

23. (original) The cellular telephone of Claim 9, wherein when said service plan tracks and deducts time usage in time blocks other than whole minute blocks, said program code for implementing the monitoring step includes:

program code for tracking available time based on a number of said blocks of time remaining; and

program code for displaying said available time with an indication of a smallest number of blocks other than whole minutes that is available.

24. (original) The cellular telephone of Claim 9, wherein said program code for implementing said tracking step includes code for completing an available time calculation that accounts for a preprogrammed time offset including deducting a first minute when said first minute is free for incoming calls.

----- 25. (New) The cellular telephone system of Claim 17, wherein the cellular phone further comprises means for displaying available minutes information on a display device of the cellular phone, wherein said means for displaying includes selecting from among displaying actual available minutes in numerical form and displaying a time tracking bar indicative of a percentage/amount of available minutes remaining.

26. (New) The cellular telephone system of Claim 17, wherein the cellular phone further comprises:

means for pre-selecting a non-zero threshold number of minutes of time at which to alert a user that the available usage time within said service plan is approaching zero; and

means for outputting an alert signal when said available minutes reaches the pre-selected non-zero threshold, whereby said user is able to refrain from exceeding a total number of minutes within said service plan.